



**TESTIMONY OF**  
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**TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND**  
**SAINT FRANCIS HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER**

**SUBMITTED TO THE**  
**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**February 20, 2023**

**SB 991, An Act Concerning Medicaid Reimbursement for Community Health Workers**

Saint Francis Hospital and Trinity Health Of New England appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony supporting **SB 991, An Act Concerning Medicaid Reimbursement for Community Health Workers**.

Saint Francis is part of Trinity Health Of New England and also includes Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital in Hartford, Saint Mary's Hospital in Waterbury, Johnson Memorial Hospital in Stafford Springs and Mercy Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts. In addition, our ministry includes a clinically integrated network (in partnership with Southern New England HealthCare Organization), physician practices, an ambulatory services networks, home health and post-acute services. We are nearly 10,000 health care providers committed to being a healing and transforming presence in the communities we serve.

Currently, Connecticut's Medicaid program does not reimburse Community Health Worker (CHW) services or incentivize health care providers to work with CHWs. Community health workers are an effective way to address inequities and promote health, particularly for low-income households served by Medicaid.

Community Health Workers (CHWs), go by many names: lay health workers, navigators, promotores, peer support workers, health educators, community health advocates, community health liaisons, and many other titles. All community health workers are public health outreach professionals with an in-depth understanding of the experiences, languages, cultures, and socioeconomic needs of the community they serve.

CHWs facilitate interactions between patients, the health care system, and social and economic services. For example, CHWs can help people: make appointments; understand their health insurance benefits; communicate effectively with doctors, pharmacists, dentists, and other health care providers; adapt medical advice to their lived reality; access other services like food and diaper banks; and more.

Trinity Health of New England has supported community health worker staff through a variety of grant resources which have been significantly beneficial to the patients we serve. One example is the staff who work with patients who have been admitted due to gun violence. In addition to the need to take care of the physical needs resulting from a gun shot wound, there are frequently many other concerns related to on-going safety, support for mental health services, at home recovery resources and developing support system for health and wellness post trauma. The hospital is positioned to take care of the medical needs but these other needs which significantly impact recovery are best coordinated by a community health worker who is able to find the appropriate resources, work with the patient to understand how to access them and be there for support should the patient encounter a barrier.

Community health workers also support discharge planning for patients who have social care needs but do not have specific medical needs. One example of this would be a family who has a low birthweight baby, but they do not have a car seat that can be used for the infant. In this case our Community Health workers make use of grant resources to purchase the car seat, show the family how to use it, and provide their contact information for on-going support should that be needed. In many situations the CHW is the resource needed to bring all the pieces together to support those who have unique needs for discharge planning, frequently due to barriers such as communication, transportation, food insecurity, housing insecurity or limited knowledge of the systems available for support.

Medicaid reimbursement for community health workers should:

- Center community and CHW voices in all stages of design and implementation
- Reimburse at rates high enough to employ CHWs at a livable wage and cover the costs of supervision, billing, and routine training
- Cover a comprehensive list of CHW services

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 991, An Act Concerning Medicaid Reimbursement for Community Health Workers.

For additional information, contact Dan Keenan, Vice President Advocacy and Government Relations at [dkeen@trinity-health.org](mailto:dkeen@trinity-health.org) or 860-714-0437.